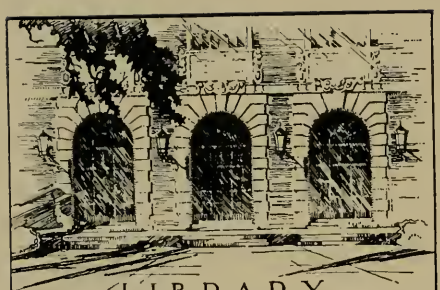

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THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHURCH IN WALES.

BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.

A Lecture,

DELIVERED AT TRURO, ON NOVEMBER 7, 1889.

FIFTH THOUSAND.

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THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CHURCH IN WALES.

THE following lecture was delivered by the Bishop of St. Asaph, on Thursday evening, November 7, 1889, at the Concert Hall, Truro, the chair being taken by the Earl of Mount Edgcumbe:—

THE present position of the Church in Wales cannot justly or adequately be explained without some reference to its past history. I do not think that any competent person has attempted to question the statement made by Mr. Gladstone that "the Welsh Sees are simply four Sees held by the suffragans of the Archbishop of Canterbury and form a portion of the province as much as any four English Sees in that province." The attempt to prove that the Church in Wales is "a complete, separate Church" has practically been abandoned, and is only now repeated by those who are indifferent to their own reputation for accuracy and trustworthiness. Again, to quote Mr. Gladstone's words, "it is practically impossible to separate the case of Wales from that of England." And he goes on to prove that the real question raised by the advocates of Disestablishment in Wales is "the Disestablishment of the Church in England."

The Identity of the Church of England and Wales.

It is remarkable that the very people who started this theory of a separate Church in Wales should almost in the same breath have formulated against the Church in Wales the charge "of being throughout its whole history an alien Church, the church of the conqueror and invader." Perhaps it is not to be wondered at that those who had the hardihood to give

The Church in Wales not Alien.

currency to these historical inaccuracies should not have the intelligence to perceive their inconsistency. This charge of alienism cannot be answered more correctly or completely than in these words of Mr. Gladstone's: "It is a proposition completely sustained by history that the people of Wales were the staunchest Churchmen in the country, as long as their Church was administered in the spirit of sympathy to their national feelings." To this admirable statement I now simply add the historical fact that less than 200 years ago the whole Welsh nation were Churchmen, and not nominal Churchmen, but conspicuous for their loyalty and devotion to the Church. Mr. Stuart Rendel, a Welsh patriot, whose patriotism is entirely free from any connection with Wales either by birth, language, residence or possessions, has the credit of having formulated the following statement:— "Nonconformity a century back evangelised Wales, and the Church of England prior to that time had reduced Wales almost to heathenism." Side by side with Mr. Rendel's statement I put that of Mr. Gladstone made last year at Wrexham: "The mass of the people believe that the Welsh people have been a very religious people for a hundred and twenty or a hundred and fifty years: but there are a great many who are in the habit of saying that before that time the Welsh were a very godless people. This is a place, I hope, of freedom of opinion: and will you allow me to say I don't believe a word of it?" I will not weary the meeting with statistics, but I have gone very carefully into the evidence on this point, and I state without hesitation that Welsh Nonconformity is in truth the outgrowth of what is called the Methodist Revival, and Welsh Calvinistic Methodism as a Nonconforming body only dates back as far as 1811, when by the ordination of their own Ministers that body separated from the Church. It is a most important point to remember with regard to the religious condition of Wales that Welsh Nonconformity is practically less than 80 years old.

Now it is no doubt true that the last century was marked

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by religious indifference in England and Wales, but that indifference was less conspicuous in Wales than in England. I can prove from authentic records with regard to my own diocese, extending over the whole of that century and applying to every parish in the Diocese, that the number of communicants was large, and that the ministrations of the Church, the state of poverty and disorganisation in which she had been left after the Commonwealth being remembered, were by no means as scanty as they have been represented. You will understand what this confusion must have been when I tell you that during the Commonwealth there were less than 100 Ministers for 700 Parishes in South Wales, and that as late as the year 1720 there were in the Diocese of St. David's 37 livings under £50 a year, 42 under £40, 60 under £30, 29 under £20, 39 under £15, 57 under £10, and 29 under £5. I do not wish to minimise or palliate the failings of the Church during the last century in Wales, but I do say that any unbiassed or dispassionate man who will take the trouble to master the evidence must come to the conclusion that those failings have been grossly and unfairly exaggerated.

Church Life and Difficulties in the last Century.

Some of that evidence I will give as briefly as possible. In 1721 Dr. Erasmus Saunders published a book on the state of religion in the Diocese of St. David's—a book written with evident candour, truthfulness and knowledge—and this is what he says of the Welsh People:—"An extraordinary disposition to religion prevails among the people of this country. There is, I believe, no part of the nation more inclined to be religious and to be delighted with it than the poor inhabitants of these mountains. They do not think it too much, when neither ways nor weather are inviting, over cold and bleak hills to travel three or four miles or more to attend the public prayers." He goes on to describe how "the servants and shepherds met for mutual instruction and edification, and how they delighted in the composing and singing of divine hymns consisting either of the doctrinal and historical parts

"An Extraordinary Disposition to Religion."

of Scriptures, or of the lives and worthy acts of eminent saints." A return is given in 1710 for the Archdeaconry of Carmarthen, and in this return is given the number in each parish who could read Welsh. I take six typical parishes, each being a rural parish. In these parishes there were 265 families and 167 poor people could read Welsh. As the return only gives the poor people who could read Welsh, you will see at once that the average is high. Moreover during the fifty years which immediately preceded the earliest appearance of the Methodist movement within the Church, a period which, if we accept Mr. Stuart Rendel's statement, must have been as gross in darkness as the hour that precedes the dawn, the Welsh Church gave to the Welsh people more than 180 Welsh Books, most of which were on religious subjects.

To all that I have said a friendly critic may reply, "Well, you have proved what every well-instructed person knows, that the Church of Wales is not a complete separate Church, that it is not an alien Church, that the statements made about that Church by political adventurers are easy of but perhaps not worthy of refutation, and you have proved that at no distant date Welshmen were all loyal and devoted to that Church, which had been theirs before the mission of Augustine, a Church which first gave them their Christianity, which gave them their Bible in Welsh, and (let not this important point be forgotten) that the Church which gave to Wales the Welsh Bible alone saved from extinction the Welsh language, which is now the life and mainstay of Welsh patriotism." All these points every fair and candid mind must accept as proved, but there still remains the great question how came it to pass that Nonconformity during the early years of this century gained such a hold upon the Welsh people.

Then, what was the cause of Welsh Nonconformity?

There was more than one cause for this.

First of all the Commonwealth left the Church in Wales more disorganized and impoverished than it did the Church

in England. Very few I think have realised the extent and severity of the damage and disaster brought upon the Church in Wales by the Commonwealth.

The Disorganization after the Commonwealth.

Again, before the Church in Wales had had time to recover herself there gathered upon the wreckage left by Cromwell, an English and often non-resident Episcopate. Energetic oversight was possibly not the characteristic of the Episcopate in any part of the Anglican Church during the last century, but it is difficult to imagine that this work of supervision could have been so completely disregarded as in many instances in Wales. Imagine a Welsh Bishop residing in some remote part of the North of England and only once visiting his Diocese, and, remembering what the means of communication and travelling were last century, picture the many inconveniences and disadvantages to the work of the Church in his Diocese, which residence at such a distance from his work must have involved. This non-residence was utterly and hopelessly bad; but that was not all. Last century the proportion of people in Wales who could speak or understand English was very much less than it is now. I doubt at the present time whether the number of people in Wales who cannot speak or understand English would amount to one-fifth of the whole population. Last century, I venture to think—but it is, of course, only a shrewd guess—that the number of purely Welsh-speaking people was much nearer four-fifths. Therefore a knowledge of the Welsh language in those who had to minister to the Welsh people was four times as important then as it is now. An English Episcopate which often did not reside among the Welsh people, and when it did reside could not speak to them, can always make good its claims to be reckoned amongst one of the chief causes of Nonconformity. Further, during last century and the early years of this century it cannot be truthfully said that the disposition of Episcopal patronage in Wales was free from gross abuses.

An English and often Non-resident Episcopate.

Next should be reckoned the extreme poverty of the Church in Wales, which brought with it the baneful necessity of holding livings in plurality. Imagine one Clergyman serving five parishes, some of them ten miles apart, and receiving from none of them more than £7 a year. When we remember all these things the marvel is that the Church in Wales surmounted her difficulties as well as she has done. In speaking, however, of the history of the Church's troubles and depression let me state this one fact. The records of the Diocese of St. Asaph alone prove that among the Englishmen who filled that See were some men of noble and earnest lives, who shewed zeal and energy in their work—while among the parochial clergy themselves I can multiply instances of devoted ministry. No doubt there were then cases of neglect and indifference among the Welsh clergy, but men like the late Mr. Justice Watkin Williams and the present member for the Swansea Boroughs, the two men who in the House of Commons have proposed the Disestablishment of the Church in Wales, have seized upon a few cases of gross immorality among the Welsh Clergy, and from these argued most unfairly, as I think, that drunkenness, dishonesty, immorality and neglect of duty were prevalent. Mr. Dillwyn, not content with this libel on the Welsh Clergy in the last century, includes in it the Welsh laity. I differ from Mr Dillwyn; I think he would find it a very difficult thing indeed to prove that the Welsh laity were as immoral and corrupt in the 18th century as he represents them to have been. I say advisedly to prove.

The extreme Poverty of the Church.

From what I have stated about the difficulties of the Church in Wales, and of the presence of earnest and devoted men among her ministers, you will see at once that the conditions were favourable to a religious revival. These devoted clergy were themselves the parents of this revival. The formal secession of the Methodists arose, as the facts prove, from no sort of hostility to the Church, but from these simple causes. A

Clergymen themselves the Parents of the Revival.

number of active, devout Churchmen, lay and clerical, upon whom the evangelical revival spirit had fallen, formed themselves into Societies of itinerant exhorters and lay-preachers. Their preaching brought about a great religious revival in Wales. Owing to the increased congregations and the wide area of the parishes, many of these being held in plurality, there was some difficulty in obtaining, when required, the ministrations of episcopally ordained clergymen. To meet this difficulty the leaders of these Methodist Societies determined in 1811 to set apart eight of the lay preachers in North Wales and eight in South Wales to administer the Sacraments.

It is on record that this step was taken by the leaders with the greatest reluctance, a reluctance which in the case of the chief leader, was before his death an openly expressed remorse. Among the founders of Welsh Methodism there was not one syllable of hostility to or disagreement from the doctrine and worship of the Church of England. In their first printed rules the Welsh Methodists repudiate most strongly the idea that they are dissenters from the Established Church, and even as late as the year 1834, at an annual association of the Welsh Methodists, held at Bala in June (10th, 11th, and 12th), the following recommendation was (at the meeting at two p.m. on the 11th) proposed by Mr. John Elias, of Anglesea, seconded by Mr. William Morris, of Pembrokeshire, and unanimously agreed to by upwards of 500 preachers and elders then present from various parts of the Principality: "That we deeply lament the nature of that agitation now so prevalent in this kingdom, and which avowedly has for its object the severing of the National Church from the State, and other changes in ecclesiastical affairs. We, therefore, are of opinion that it pertains not unto us to interfere in such matters; and we strenuously enjoin upon every member of our connection to meddle not with them that are given to change, but on the contrary to pray for the king and for all that are in authority that

Yet always Loyal to the Church.

we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

It is not my business to specify the various steps in the declension of the tone and spirit of Welsh Nonconformity. This declension is a fact well-known. I prefer to record the words of a Welsh Nonconformist, a Liberal, and a writer in a Radical newspaper. I quote his testimony from the *Homilist*, an English Nonconformist magazine of January, 1888. "The characteristic feature of Welsh Nonconformity is the general air of lethargy and sloth that pervades everything. The mournful cry issues from the chapels in the land 'Who hath believed our reports, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?' . . . . . the dread "Ichabod" appears to have been written over our doors, and the tale to be told 'The glory has departed.' The cause must be sought for in the decay of the preachers. In fact the *real* preacher seems quickly becoming a relic of the past. . . . . Enter into conversation with your minister and try and find out his hobby. Politics first, politics second, politics to the end of the chapter."

Political Character of Modern Nonconformity.

At a recent gathering of the Methodists in the county of Cardigan, the following appears in a report read by one of their Ministers:—"The Chapels have generally relaxed into a state of lethargy and carelessness, we are sadly wanting in devotion and zeal towards the cause, and in brotherly love towards one another. It would be difficult for the world to know to-day that we are disciples of Jesus Christ, judging by the measure of the love we bear one another." This statement is corroborated by the statistical report of the Methodist body in North Cardiganshire for 1888, read by the Rev. Thomas Levi. I ask special attention for these figures, because I am enabled to compare these official Methodist statistics for 1888 with the official Methodist statistics of the same district for 1878. In 1888 the Methodist Chapels in this district numbered 48, in 1878, 46. In 1888 the Ministers numbered 27, in 1878, 25, and the number of

Its Spiritual Declension.

communicants in 1888 numbered 5576, in 1878 they numbered 6070; the number of children (in the Chapels) in 1888 was 2871, in 1878 it was 4434; the total number of the congregations in this district in 1888 is given as 11,228, in 1878 as 13,544.

Before I point out the significance of these figures, let me remind you that the Calvinistic Methodists are in every sense the most powerful Nonconformist body in Wales, and that Cardiganshire is their stronghold in South Wales. Now you will see that the official Methodist statistics which I have quoted prove that during the last ten years the Methodist chapels in North Cardiganshire have increased by *two* and the Methodist ministers by *two*. Now observe these significant facts. While the ministers and chapels have thus far increased, the number of communicants has decreased in ten years by 494, the number of children has decreased by 1563 (that is, by more than one-third), and the congregations have decreased by 2316.

Its Numerical Losses.

But looking in another direction the evidence is the same. In a Welsh newspaper called the *Goleuad*, which is the recognized organ of the Methodists, and which admirably represents the decadence of Welsh Nonconformity, the following appears in a leading article upon Welsh preaching:—"Where it (our preaching) fails is in its influence upon the life; there is not the harmony there ought to be between profession and practice. Is it possible that Wales must again struggle slowly through a period of indifference until she has lost the mighty influences that rule her? We fail to create a sense of confidence in our young people; they come and go according to their own tendencies, with only the slightest degree of the feeling of any responsibility." This confession of the *Goleuad* is confirmed by the recent words of an eminent Methodist minister, who says, "What irreverence is there even to impiety at our sacred ordinances! No pretence, much less feeling of devotion in our worship; the throne of grace

Its General Deterioration.

is approached in prayer, only a few bending the head, much less bowing the knee." All this points to a deterioration much more serious than any decline in numbers. I quote these facts in no party spirit, and for no party purpose, but simply as proofs of a state of things familiar to anyone who knows well the inner life of Wales.

Let me now pass on to deal with some of the misstatements made with regard to Wales by advocates of Dis-

Is there Proselytising and Persecution? If so by whom?

establishment. Last May Mr. Dillwyn stated in the House of Commons that the Church in Wales was a proselytising Church, that it was a fact that the influence of the landlords and of most of the employers was exerted to induce people to declare themselves Churchmen. I claim to know Wales well, and I say advisedly that that statement is untrue. But I go further and say that if truth is to be made known, it will be found that such pressure and persecution—for it is nothing less—as Mr. Dillwyn speaks of, is often and very freely practised among the Nonconformists. Within my own experience I know a number of cases of Nonconformist employers of labour, who have not only compelled their servants to go to their Chapel but have kept back from their wages contributions to the chapel fund. The following case is also known to me. A Nonconformist started some works, and after a time decided to build a chapel belonging to his own denomination, for which a contribution was levied upon the workmen. Among the workmen were Nonconformists belonging to other bodies, and Churchmen, who all had to contribute, many of them as much as £5.

With regard to attendance at religious worship, Mr. Dillwyn tells us that 86,438 is the average attendance at

Mr. Dillwyn's Extraordinary Figures.

Church in North Wales on Sundays, and 317,078 at Chapels; that is, that a total of 403,516 out of a population of 480,848, on an average attend a place of worship in North Wales on Sunday. Allowing 25 per cent. for those who from age, illness, or other causes are unable to attend public worship, we shall

appreciate the full value of Mr. Dillwyn's statistics which tell us that the average, *not* the extraordinary attendance at places of worship in N. Wales, actually exceeds the possible number who could attend by 42,882. In order to compose an argument against the Church in Wales Mr. Dillwyn has conjured up an army of 42,000 statistical spectres!

Some genuine Church Statistics.

In Brymbo parish, where Mr. Osborne Morgan resides, I was last July at the opening of a new church with accommodation for about 500. Last month I visited the parish again. The Vicar and the Churchwardens find the church so crowded that they are already preparing to enlarge it. At the confirmation on October 3rd in the parish church of Brymbo I confirmed 170 candidates, 11 of whom were over 50 years of age, 14 were over 30 years of age, 25 over 20 years of age. The Church itself—seats and aisles—was densely crowded, and a large number of people were outside in the Churchyard unable to gain admittance. All this took place within sight of the house of a Right Honourable Gentleman who is perpetually telling the English people that the churches in Wales are empty. The previous week at a confirmation at Rhosllanerchrugog, a mining parish not far from Brymbo, when I arrived at the church twenty minutes before the service began, so dense was the crowd that I had the greatest difficulty in getting into the church. The confirmees numbered 100. In the diocese of St. Asaph, since the end of May I have confirmed over 3600 candidates.

Mr. Osborne Morgan's Blunders.

Most untrustworthy with regard to the Church, Mr. Osborne Morgan is no more to be trusted when he treats of Dissent. He stated in the House of Commons that "the Calvinistic Methodists alone gave £173,000 a year to their cause. They had 4,500 places of worship, and a corresponding number of ministers and preachers." Now the total number of the ministers of the Calvinistic Methodists, Baptists, Independents and Wesleyans was in 1887 under 1600, the total number of the Calvinistic Methodist ministers

being 619. Mr. Osborne Morgan's language is ambiguous; if he was speaking of all the Nonconformists in Wales, his imagination simply trebled the truth, if, as the context seems to shew, he was speaking of the Methodists only, then his imagination has multiplied the truth seven times.

Nonconformist Ministers and Church Clergy.

The comparative number of the clergy and the Nonconformist ministers is an important point. Last session another Welsh member of Parliament described the Welsh clergy as a comparatively small body of clergymen who minister to the wants of a minority of the people. The actual numbers in 1887 were as follows:—The clergy in Wales numbered 1427, and the Nonconformist ministers 1557. And here I would call attention to another very important consideration. The Calvinistic Methodist ministers are the most numerous and the best educated of the Nonconformist ministers in Wales, but even among them one third are engaged in some secular calling in addition to their ministry, a fact which is equally true of the ministers of the other denominations, so that a considerable reduction has to be made even upon the 1557.

The Truth about Chapel Debts.

Once more, while we are frequently reminded of the merits of the voluntary system, we are never told of the enormous chapel debts in Wales. The debt upon the Methodist chapels in Wales alone exceeded in 1887 £320,000; and while their adherents have been steadily decreasing, the chapel debts have been advancing by leaps and bounds. Sir Hussey Vivian, in his speech upon the Disestablishment motion last session, combated this fact, and gave as a proof of his contention a chapel built in recent years which had cost £13,000, the debt on which had been reduced to £1500. This chapel was completed about 1874, and the debt remaining upon it at the time Sir Hussey Vivian spoke was close upon £7000. If the whole truth were known, I believe the debts upon the Baptist and Independent chapels do not fall far short of those on the Methodist chapels. £320,000 multiplied three times gives a very large and awkward total.

The full significance of this enormous burden of debt remains yet to be fully understood.

Another statement made in the House of Commons last session was the following by Mr. Thomas Ellis, M.P. :— "What remains of the Established Church in Wales is the rent-receivers, large landowners and capitalists of Wales." This reckless and ridiculous statement I purpose meeting with some facts about the Church. The Bishop of St. David's, in his recent charge, gave the following statistics :—The number of Sunday school scholars in the Diocese of St. David's has advanced from 28,763 in 1880 to 32,923 in 1889. The number confirmed for the triennial period ending December 1st, 1876, numbered 4352, and for that ending in 1888, 8545; in other words, the number confirmed has doubled during the past twelve years. The number of communicants has risen from 26,589 to 39,401 in the same period, an increase of 50 per cent. This is for the Diocese of St. David's alone. You will notice that the percentage of communicants in St. David's in proportion to the population exceeds that of any Diocese in England.

An Answer to Mr. Thomas Ellis.

I will supplement these facts about the Diocese of St. David's with the confirmation statistics of my own Diocese. During the last six years the number confirmed in the Diocese of St. Asaph average 2000 each year. Compared with the population, this shows a larger percentage of confirmed than in many English Dioceses.

Confirmation Statistics in St. Asaph Diocese.

The Burials Act, passed in 1880, suggests some very significant reflections. For years previously Mr. Osborne Morgan had filled the land with the sound of the terrible grievance which the Nonconformists of Wales suffered in having their dead buried with the services of the Church. I believe he stated that the grievance affected 600,000 in Wales. Now, if only half what he said was true, it is quite obvious that the Nonconformists would eagerly have seized the relief given by this

Burial Statistics.

Burials Act. Well, what are the facts? Since the passing of that Act, in 266 parishes in North Wales, 1440 funerals have been celebrated under the provisions of that Act by Nonconformist ministers, while 20,298 funerals have been celebrated according to the rites of the Established Church. I know in my own experience a number of cases where every possible pressure has been put by Nonconformist Ministers upon members of their flocks to adopt the provision of this Act in the burial of their dead; and such pressure has been stubbornly resisted.

The Denbigh Churchyard and Mr. Gee.

I leave this branch of the subject with a striking illustration from my own diocese. Recently the churchyard attached to the Parish Church of Denbigh had to be closed or enlarged; the adjoining field, from which alone enlargement was possible, was leased by Mr. Thomas Gee, a Methodist preacher, editor of the *Baner*, and leader of the Tithe agitation. Mr. Gee refused to give up the required ground unless, for the future, Nonconformist ministers were permitted to officiate *within* the Church at funerals. This permission could not be granted, and the enlargement of the churchyard was therefore abandoned. Meanwhile the Denbigh Town Council, of which Mr. Gee is a member, formed themselves into a Burial Board, bought a piece of ground, and opened a Cemetery. The cemetery was hardly completed when the working men of Denbigh, Churchmen and Nonconformists alike, took the matter up entirely of their own accord. They approached the landlord, who promised to *give* the necessary ground, provided Mr. Gee gave up his lease; but Mr. Gee was master of the situation and stubborn. "You've got a cemetery now," he said in so many words—'what do you want with a churchyard?" but the working men would have nothing to do with the cemetery, and the storm of indignation rose so high that poor Mr. Gee collapsed beneath its onset and he gave up his lease. The additional ground was secured, and consecrated by me this summer. On the day of consecration the rain came pouring down,

but notwithstanding this the people came literally in thousands; the Church and churchyard were simply packed with people, and I have never seen a more reverent or impressive congregation.

I should like before I sit down to say something on the Tithe Question.

Sir William Harcourt in his recent speech at Carnarvon, stated that "Tithe, being national property, ought to be applied to the uses of the nation," and recommended its being given to secure free education for the people. This is a very tempting bribe; but let us see how it works out. In my own diocese the Voluntary Schools are twice as numerous as the Board Schools. Assuming the Disendowment of the Church in Wales, there can be no doubt that the Church would be compelled to give up her Voluntary Schools. At the lowest computation this would more than double the present School Board Rate for Wales. This year's Blue Book gives the present School Board Rate for Wales as £140,381. If the School Boards were called upon to supply all the Elementary Education for Wales, that rate would, I believe, amount to, at least, £300,000. This is putting it very low, because if the Voluntary Schools are closed the old School Buildings would not be transferred, and the expenditure to supply new ones would be enormous. But to this estimate, if there is to be Free Education, as Sir William Harcourt promises, £80,000 a year must be added for school pence. The bribe, therefore, works out something like this. The parochial tithe in Wales amounts to £137,000 a year. Set this against the £380,000 and it leaves £243,000 a year to be drawn from the pockets of the Welsh Rate-payers, that is to say that the acceptance of Sir William Harcourt's proposal would mulct the Welsh Farmers in an increased School Board taxation of £100,000 a year.

Tithe and Free Education—How does it work out?

"Legal Alienation of National Property!"

Some one may ask what about the tithes to Lay-Impropriators. I asked Sir William Harcourt whether he included these under tithe. This is his reply :—

MALWOOD, LYNDHURST,
October 31*st*, 1889.

MY LORD,

In reply to your letter of the 30th, I have to say that I should suppose when National property has been legally alienated to private uses it would acquire the character of personal rather than of public estate.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

W. V. HARCOURT.

The spectacle of Sir William Harcourt in one breath demanding the nationalisation of tithe, and in the next breath inventing the fiction of a "legal alienation of national property" is a political somersault marvellous even in these days.

One word more as to the future. We are bidden by our opponents, "Look at the representation of Wales; the great majority of your members are against the Church."

This is a Time of Transition.

True, I reply. But they owe their seats to other causes besides their opposition to the Church. Supposing that Yorkshire or Cornwall returns members pledged to Disestablishment, is the Church forthwith to be disestablished in Yorkshire and Cornwall? Again, the Church, even by the confession of her enemies, is making steady and great strides in Wales; and granting that the ballot box is against us, would it be fair, just, or even politic to give effect to a political change which in a few years the majority of the Welsh people themselves would deplore and regret. Sir William Harcourt, and his appropriate companion, Mr. Cyril Flower, M.P., both recently speaking in Wales, sneered at the starvation of the poor Welsh Clergy, and tell

us we never hear of starving Nonconformist ministers. The answer is plain and complete. The Nonconformist ministry in Wales is chiefly a preaching ministry; in the rural districts, especially, pastoral work is not attempted by the Nonconformist ministers. In a large number of villages they have no resident ministers at all. As a rule the Nonconformist minister in the rural district is engaged in some business or other. And this fact is in itself a proof that their ministry must lack the two essentials of wholeheartedness and independence.

Furthermore, Nonconformity in Wales ministers in Welsh, and has utterly failed to start English causes. The Nonconformist official Year Books state that "they can only maintain their hold upon the country through the English language, that a large proportion of the rising generation are being transformed into English-speaking people, and that like the flow of the tide, the English language is advancing in the Principality." The Methodists have for years striven hard to start English Chapels. According to their own statement their English communicants number 4 per 1000 of the population. A remarkable letter from the Rev. Emlyn Jones appeared last week. He confessed that his denomination, the Independents, were failing entirely to provide English services, that of the £700 a year given towards the English causes in Wales £400 was collected in England, and that their opportunity had well-nigh passed. As a comment on all this, let it be clearly understood that the Church in Wales is now doing her duty by and making rapid progress among the Welsh-speaking people, that English is quickly becoming the language of the people, and that the English-speaking people in Wales are insufficiently ministered to by Nonconformity.

Progress of the Church, and difficulties of Nonconformists.

To sum up, I would not lift a finger to maintain the Established Church in Wales if I was not profoundly

Highest Welsh Interests bound up in the Church.

convinced that the highest interests of the Welsh people are bound up in the welfare of the Church in Wales. To cripple the Church would be to cripple the social, intellectual, moral and religious progress of the Welsh people. The Church in Wales pleads guilty to many shortcomings in the past, but that man is no true patriot who would weaken the powerful religious influence which she exerts to-day. Her difficulties have been many, and not a few confront her still; but her life and expansion are undeniable. They are borne witness to by Nonconformists no less than by Churchmen. I appeal with confidence to religious minded Welshmen to maintain in her integrity this mighty power for good.

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